Pers Earhart, Amelia

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Flying housewife Mrs. Ann Pellegreno of Saline, Mich., celebrates with her crew in Oakland, Calif., at the end of their globe-girdling flight in a 30-year-old airplane. From left are William Polhmus and Lee Koepke, both of Ann Arbor, Mich., Mrs. Pellegreno and Col. William Payne of McLean, Va.

NEW THEORY ON EARHART CASE

Aviatrix Completes World Flight

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—A modern-day Amelia Earhart with the same type of blonde, tousled hair and spirit of adventure believes after retracing the ill-fated 1937 flight that the famed aviatrix crashed in the Southwest Pacific near Howland Island.

Mrs. Ann Pellegreno, 30-year-old Saline, Mich., housewife, landed her twin-engine Lockheed Model 10 Electra at Oakland yesterday, completing an east-west circling of the earth which began here June 9.

She bucked strong headwinds during an 18-hour-and-25-minute home stretch from Honolulu.

"I think she (Miss Earhart) went down in the Pacific not an abnormally far distance from Howland Island," said the hazel-eyed flier after covering more than 27,000 miles in 243 flying hours with three crewmen in their 30-year-old plane.

Mrs. Pellegreno's co-pilot was William Payne, an Air Force colonel from McLean, Va.; her navigator, William Polhemus, and her mechanic, Lee Koepke, both of Ann Arbor, Mich.

Miss Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, were swallowed up in mystery July 2, 1937, after taking off from Lae, New Guinea, for Howland.

Mrs. Pellegreno dropped some flowers on Howland when she flew over the mile-square island 1,620 miles southwest of Honolulu.

"When Amelia made the flight, a landing strip had been prepared for her on Howland," the Michigan aviatrix recalled.

"We couldn't even see it when we flew over, only just a lighthouse."

Mrs. Pellegreno did not elaborate yesterday on the reasons for her theory of where Miss Earhart was lost.

Mrs. Pellegreno and her crew planned to fly on to Miss Earhart's native Kansas today for a big celebration at Newton and a reunion with their spouses.

Mrs. Pellegreno's flight, backed by a number of commercial sponsors, was announced as aimed at shedding some light on the Earhart mystery.

"It was after we left New Guinea that we felt for the first time we were really retracing history," the petite Mrs. Pellegreno told newsmen at planeside.

Fred Goerner, CBS newsman who wrote a book based on the contention that Miss Earhart went down near the Marshall Islands, about 1,500 miles to the north, and was executed by the Japanese, challenged Mrs. Pellegreno.

He commented that she had not actually retraced the Earhart route, as she flew from Lae, New Guinea, to Tarawa, in the Gilbert Islands, then over Howland, while Miss Earhart did not stop at Tarawa.

"I knew you were going to say that," Mrs. Pellegreno replied, "but it doesn't make any difference. We easily could have made the flight directly."

Goerner pressed for what she had learned but she replied that she had some information coming by mail.